What is claimed is:

1. A washing machine control method comprising steps of:

accelerating a motor to a target rotational speed, by periodically applying to the motor a pulse width modulation (PWM) signal having a predetermined duty ratio;

storing in a memory a set of PWM values corresponding to the signal applied in said accelerating step, by sensing a rotational speed of the motor;

outputting a PWM signal having a duty ratio of zero, after the sensed motor speed reaches the target rotational speed, to allow the motor to freewheel to a stop;

computing an average of the stored PWM values;

measuring a rotational angle of the motor as the motor freewheels to a stop; and

calculating a laundry amount estimation value based on the average of the stored PWM values and the motor's rotational angle.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a step of determining a laundry amount by comparing the calculated laundry amount estimation value to a set of laundry amount reference values stored in a lookup table.

3. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the laundry amount estimation value equals $w_1 PWM_{ave} + w_2 \theta_{motor}$, where PWM_{ave} is the computed average of the stored PWM values, θ_{motor} is the measured rotational angle, and w_1 and w_2 are weight constants.

4. The method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the weight constants w_1 and w_2 are arbitrarily set to render the laundry amount estimation as a specific value when the motor

is driven without a load.

5. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the stored PWM values of said average computing step are the PWM values corresponding to the PWM signal applied to the motor, from a motor drive initiating point to the time of discontinuing the drive of the motor.

6. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the motor is driven at a constant speed corresponding to the target rotational speed for a predetermined time before said outputting step.

7. The method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the stored PWM values of said average computing step are the PWM values corresponding to the PWM signal applied to the motor, from a motor drive initiating point to the time of discontinuing the drive of the motor.

8. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the PWM value is applied to the motor according to a 4ms cycle.